

“Serving Those Who Served”

Call 1-800-562-2308 for Statewide assistance

www.dva.wa.gov

Vol. 3 Issue 12

JUNE 2002

WWII Veterans Receive Graduation Honors



Nine veterans receive diplomas at Inaugural “Operation Recognition”

Nine World War II veterans received their high school diplomas as part of Washington State’s first “Operation Recognition” graduation ceremony, held at the Washington State Soldiers Home and Colony on Tuesday, May 14.

Escorted by Senator Joseph Zarelli (R-18) and leaders of various Veterans Service Organizations, the graduates - wearing graduation gowns in Orting High School’s colors- marched into a packed Chilson Hall to the accompaniment of Orting High School’s band playing Elgar’s traditional “Pomp and Circumstance”.

The graduates all enlisted in the U.S. military during WWII - prior to graduating - and qualified to receive their diplomas under SB 6430. Prime sponsored by Sen. Zarelli, the bill was unanimously passed by the 2002 Washington State Legislature.

Identified as “Operation Recognition”, this bill allows Washington’s school districts to issue high school diplomas to WWII veterans who sacrificed this rite-of-passage in the name of freedom.

“After the war, many of these veterans were not able to finish high school for various reasons, but led productive lives and built our communities over their lifetime,” said John M. King, director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

The following veterans received their diplomas from Orting High School principal Gary Walkup:

Robert Campbell, Rupert Markham, Leland Mills, Robert Boyd, Robert Bass, Joe Gregory, Ray Hudson, James Drake and Richard Russell.

To receive an application for “Operation Recognition”, call 1-800-562-2308 or download the application from WDVA’s website at www.dva.wa.gov. The site also contains suggestions for honoring qualified WWII veterans.

Continued on page 3



OPERATION RECOGNITION



Did you miss graduating from high school due to military service in World War II? You may be eligible to receive a high school diploma.

During the 1940’s, thousands of young men and women across this country left high school and the comforts of home and hearth to serve gallantly in the armed forces during WWII. Their sacrifice ensured our freedom, built our country into a superpower, and shaped the entire course of history throughout the world. After the war, many of these veterans were not able to finish high school for various reasons, but led productive lives and built our communities over their lifetime.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions, The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 6430 allowing school districts to issue high school diplomas to WWII veterans. “Operation Recognition” for WWII Veterans, is being instituted through individual school districts to award full high school diplomas to qualifying WWII veterans. This is a small, overdue, gesture of our society’s gratitude for the sacrifice these individuals made in the name of freedom.

Veterans who left high school to join the military during WWII are eligible to receive a high school diploma if the veteran:

- Is an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States;
- Was scheduled to graduate from high school after 1940 and before 1951; and
- Left high school before graduation to serve in WWII.

Veterans who received a GED are still eligible to receive a high school diploma.

After completing the application (available by calling the WDVA at 1-800-562-2308 or by visiting the website at www.dva.wa.gov) and providing a copy of “honorable” discharge papers, the application & discharge information should be mailed to the High School the veteran or their family member is requesting the diploma from.

Veterans may apply EITHER to the high school they would have graduated from, to the high school in their local community, OR to a high school to which they have substantial ties. (However, the law does not require high schools to participate in this program.)

What’s Inside...

<i>Operation Recognition</i>	<i>page 1</i>
<i>Director’s Message</i>	<i>page 2</i>
<i>National Notes</i>	<i>page 4</i>
<i>In Focus: EX-Prisoners of War</i>	<i>page 6</i>
<i>National WWII Memorial Update</i>	<i>page 7</i>
<i>Veterans Homes Highlights</i>	<i>page 8</i>
<i>Hire-a-Vet Month / Information Fair Schedule</i>	<i>page 10</i>
<i>In the Spotlight - Melissa Wilt</i>	<i>page 11</i>
<i>State Legislation</i>	<i>page 11</i>

Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 41150
1011 Plum St, 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

Veteran Voices is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veterans Home residents.

Volume 3, Issue 12
JUNE 2002

Governor
Gary Locke

WDVA Director
John M. King

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Public Information Officer
Colleen Gilbert

Graphic Designer
Miriam Young

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US
(877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.



Publication Information

Please submit comments, articles and address changes electronically to:
colleen@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2180 or
miriam@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2169
or mail to:

Veteran Voices
PO Box 41150 Olympia,
WA 98504.

Articles must be received by the 1st of March, June, Sept., and Dec., for consideration in that month's issue.

Publication of articles is at the discretion of the **Veteran Voices** editorial board.

When credit is given to the source, articles from the **Veteran Voices** may be reprinted.

To obtain this publication in an alternative format call
(360) 725-2169.

Working Partnerships Between VA and VSOs



Over the past two months, I have attended the annual conventions of several Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) throughout Washington State. I would like to thank the VSO's again for their hospitality and the privilege of speaking before their distinguished membership.

At each convention, I have been honored to deliver a token of appreciation from Washington State, to each organizations' Service Officers. Each one performs an indispensable function for veterans across the state. As you know, in order for veterans to access the U.S. DVA benefits and/or compensation earned during military service, numerous forms and types of evidence are required. With the help of Service Officers, the burden of completing this task is lifted from the veteran and taken on by an individual experienced in working through the complicated claims process.

Over the years, the laws and regulations governing entitlements and benefits to veterans have

become so convoluted that it literally takes these Service Officer experts to decipher their meaning. That is why the claims process has been the topic of much debate over the years. At the federal level, the Department of Veterans Affairs is looking again at ways to improve the claims process for veterans.



During the African American PTSD Veterans Conference John King presented Certificates of Appreciation to Service Officers.

Interestingly, a Claims Processing Task Force Report, released in 2001, reported that among other areas, "working partnerships between VA and Veterans Service Organizations" was labeled as an important area for improvement. While many of us have thought this for years, the organization and implementation of a partnership has simply not happened.

That is why the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), is advocating for greater involvement of the State Departments of Veterans

Affairs, Veterans Service Organizations and County Veteran Service Officers in the comprehensive improvements of the Claims Process. For too many years, the U.S. DVA has developed and implemented programs with minimal involvement from those entities who must live within VA rules.

I have the honor of serving on NASDVA's Executive Committee and have been a strong proponent for greater State and local involvement in any Claims Process Improvement. Just imagine what could be accomplished for veterans if each Service Officer – whether federal, state, county or VSO – operated with the same instructions and the same expectations. Standard performance criteria, training opportunities and certification would provide focus for Service Officers who in turn would have a clear picture of how to produce well-developed "ready-to-rate" claims, in a timely manner.

Together we can accomplish this goal. Washington State already has the cadre of Service Officers whose dedication to serving veterans is commendable. The next step is for our counterparts at the federal level to recognize the potential for effective partnerships between the U.S. DVA, the states and the VSOs. Washington State will pioneer ways to better serve our Veterans' Community – thanks to all the devoted Service Officers from every organization.

John King

WDVA Master Plan

On May 14, a combined Veteran's Affairs Advisory Committee and Commander's Call meeting was held at the Washington Soldiers Home at Orting. Following this meeting, the Joint Committee on Veteran's and Military Affairs held a public hearing. At both meetings, a briefing on the Continuum of Care plan was given by Jerry Towne, Orting Superintendent and Continuum of Care Team Leader.

As outlined in the Master Plan, after completion of the 240-bed nursing facility at Retsil, the mission of the Washington Soldiers Home will shift to address the often unmet needs of the state's younger veterans. Veterans of the Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, and current conflicts will require care in any one of the following categories:

- Light Nursing Care;
- Short-term Assistance through a Transitional Residence Program (Participants could include homeless or potentially homeless veterans, veterans with PTSD or other issues that have contributed to their homelessness and female veterans.); or
- Long-term Domiciliary Care / Traditional Domiciliary (Participants could include veterans whose medical or mental health conditions will likely prevent them from establishing housing in a community setting.).

The first in a series of public meetings will be held on July 11, 2002, at the Orting Multi-Purpose Center. The meeting will begin at 6:30PM and all interested community members are invited to attend and participate in the discussion of the exciting changes being proposed for the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony, at Orting. For more information, please contact Superintendent Jerry Towne at 360-893-4500 or log on to www.dva.wa.gov.



The Joint Committee on Veteran's and Military Affairs held the May 14th hearing at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting.

WWII Graduates Continued



Senator Joseph Zarelli, 18th Dist. presented each resident with a diploma. Pictured here is Army Veteran Robert Boyd.



Navy Veteran Joe Gregory



Coast Guard Merchant Marine Veteran Robert Bass



VAAC Representative and Army Veteran Rupert Markham



Bob Campbell, Marine Veteran, Puyallup resident, and 13 year volunteer for the Soldiers Home.



Army and Merchant Marine Veteran James Drake



Army and Navy Veteran Leland Mills



Army Veteran Ray Hudson

Troops to Teachers - An Avenue to a Second Career In Public Education

Troops to Teachers is a cooperative program of the Department of Education and Department of Defense which provides referral and placement assistance to military personnel interested in teaching as a second career. The Troops to Teachers program resulted from legislation introduced in the fiscal year 1993 Defense Authorization Bill as a result of military downsizing. The program is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Support (DANTES), a Department of Defense (DoD) agency.

Since the inception of the program in 1994, about 3,000 service members have made the transition from the military to classrooms across the nation. The Troops to Teachers program has currently established 20 state Placement Assistance offices in those states that have an interest in attracting veterans as educators.

For more information call George Willett at 800-743-2357, or by email at gwillett@ospi.wednet.edu.
www.proudtoserveagain.com.

VA Emergency Preparedness Research, Education and Bio-Terrorism Prevention Act of 2002

H.R. 3253 *Expands the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) role in homeland security, creating new research centers to counter biological, chemical, and radiological terrorism.*

Approved by Full Committee on May 9, 2002; House floor approval pending.

Jobs for Veterans Act

H.R. 4015 *Reform veterans' job training and placement programs in the Department of Labor through a new system of incentives and accountability.*

Approved by Full Committee on May 9, 2002; House floor approval pending.

Veterans and Survivors' Benefits Expansion Act of 2002

H.R. 4085 *Increases disability compensation payments with a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), and expands benefit programs for veterans, their dependents and survivors*

Approved by Full Committee on May 9, 2002; House floor approval pending.

Extended Care Services and Required Nursing Home Care

S. 2043 *Extends through December 31, 2008, the period during which: (1) noninstitutional extended care services will be considered to be medical services required to be provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to eligible veterans; and (2) the Secretary shall be required to provide nursing home care to veterans with service-connected disabilities.*

6/6/02: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.

Veterans Hearing Loss Compensation Act of 2002 **S. 2237** *Removes the requirement that a veteran's hearing loss must be total in order to qualify for disability compensation, as long as the combination of hearing loss in both ears was the result of service-connected disability.*

6/6/02: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.

Concurrent Receipt Update

The concept of concurrent receipt dates back to 1891, when Congress passed a law prohibiting active-duty or retired personnel from also receiving disability pensions.

Language in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107-107) authorizes concurrent receipt, but does not provide the funding to enact legislation allowing disabled military retirees to receive their retirement pay and VA disability compensation concurrently.

Several bills and budget resolutions are currently pending in Congress to address concurrent receipt. Proposals range from full funding of concurrent receipt to partial funding starting with military retirees with disabilities of 60% or greater.

VA Begins Phase II of CARES Process

The Department of Veterans Affairs' is beginning Phase II in its national initiative to ensure its health care system meets the needs of veterans today and in the future. This initiative is part of VA's health care planning process called CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services).

The first phase of the CARES process was conducted in the Chicago area, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and was completed in February 2002. Phase II will include the rest of the VA health care system and is scheduled to be completed within two years.

"VA's goal is to direct our resources where they are most needed, and at the same time provide the best care possible to more veterans at more locations," said Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. Leo S. Mackay. Jr. "We will work with veterans, VA employees, university affiliates and local and national elected officials to ensure everyone's concerns are heard as we enhance the quality of veterans health care."

VA launched CARES to bring its aging health care system into the 21st century. VA's health care system was designed and built decades ago when inpatient care was the primary focus, with long admissions for diagnosis and treatment. With changes in geographic concentrations of veterans and new methods of medical treatment, VA's medical system was not providing care as efficiently as possible and medical services were not always easily accessible to some veterans.

To coordinate VA's 1,300 sites of care, representing the largest health care system in the country, VA's medical system is divided into 21 regional networks called VISNs (Veterans Integrated Service Networks).

VISN 12 (Chicago, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan) comprised the pilot study; Phase II of CARES will include the remaining 20 VISNs.

During the next 18 months, the networks will collect data and facility information for planning initiatives that will provide the best care for veterans today and in the future. Throughout the process, veterans, academic affiliates, unions and employees will be briefed. Stakeholder opinions will be solicited and will be an important part of the decision process, as will be the preservation of special services, such as those provided our paralyzed veterans.

Once completed, an independent commission selected by the Secretary of VA will evaluate the draft National CARES Plan. Members of the commission, who will be chosen in the fall of 2002, will include individuals with special knowledge or interest relating to VA health care, as well as representatives from stakeholders' groups.

As part of the commission's evaluation of each VISN's plans, hearings will be held with, and comments accepted from, local stakeholders. Only after careful evaluation of these comments will the commission then forward its recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary will make his final CARES announcement in September 2003.

Phase II of CARES will be headed up by Frederick L. Malphurs, who was the VISN 2 Network director for the upstate New York (Albany, Buffalo, Bath, Canandaigua and Syracuse VA medical centers) since October 1995. Since joining VA in 1969, Malphurs has been assigned to nine VA medical centers.

Malphurs will work with an independent actuarial contractor and VA staff to project veteran populations, determine what kind of health care veterans need and where it is best to provide that care. This data will be available to networks within two months.

Source: Federal VA Press Release: June 6, 2002

New Veterans Employment Program Proposed

The White House has asked Congress to authorize a new, comprehensive employment program for veterans that would consolidate the federal government's job-search efforts for former service members within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The unemployment rate for veterans between 20 and 24 years of age was 14.8 percent in the first quarter of 2002, compared to 5.1 percent unemployment for all veterans.

"We want to use competitive grants and performance-based outcomes - key elements that have improved service in other federal programs," Principi said.

If approved by Congress, the new program, called the "Veterans Employment, Business Opportunity and Training (VEBOT) Program," would take effect in 2003. It would cost about \$197 million the first year and entail the transfer to VA of 199 civil service jobs from the Department of Labor.

Highlights of the proposal include:

- Establishing a system for state governors or public or private organizations to receive grants to provide employment programs for veterans;
- Transferring to VA the current functions of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training; and
- Transferring to VA from the Labor Department responsibility for both the transition assistance program and the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project.

"In light of VA's clear mission of service to veterans, VA would be in a stronger position to objectively evaluate veterans' employment needs, while adapting to the needs of future generations of veterans," Principi said.

Source: Federal VA Press Release: May 29, 2002

VA Studies Long-Term Effects of Terrorism

The indirect consequences of a terrorist attack may be more severe than the direct, long-term harm caused by a weapon of mass destruction, according to researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and a British medical school.

Beside casualties caused directly from an attack, “the normal reaction to an unfamiliar and life-threatening event — fear, confusion and flight — could cause greater damage than the attack itself,” the report says.

The report lists many effects that would follow an attack involving not only the health of those in the immediate vicinity, but also a larger population. The effects include social and economic damage.

The researchers concluded that unexposed citizens could overwhelm hospitals because symptoms that often occur in an emergency situation — like headaches, shortness of breath and difficulty concentrating — are similar to the early effects of chemical and biological warfare agents. Stress, fear, worry and grief will aggravate existing medical and psychological problems.

The report highlights the potential for an outbreak of “mass sociogenic illness,” where acute physical symptoms, like loss of consciousness, can be triggered by unusual odors or even rumors of contamination following a widely reported CBN incident. Immediate effects on reproductive behavior also may occur, as reported following the radiation disaster in Chernobyl and the sarin gas attack in Tokyo.

The report also provides a prescription for reducing some negative effects of terrorist attacks. Key factors include the importance of long-term health care, effective communication by the government, timely health risk assessment, research and economic support.

Implementing the recommendations will require communication, coordination, cooperation and basic education among local, state and federal government, health care professionals, law enforcement, the military, the press, business interests and the general public.

Source: Federal VA Press Release: April 24, 2002

VA Contacts “Project SHAD” Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun to contact veterans who participated in certain military tests involving biological and chemical warfare materials during the 1960s about medical care and benefits to which they may be entitled.

The initial VA notifications involved 622 of about 4,300 veterans already identified as participants in Project SHAD. This is the first of a continuing series of letters that will be mailed until all identified participants have been notified.

From 1963 through 1970, the Department of Defense (DoD) conducted tests to determine the effectiveness of shipboard detection and protective measures against chemical and biological threats and to determine the potential risk to American forces. The tests were conducted under the broad heading of Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD).

While much about the tests is still classified, DoD has begun to declassify the information VA would need to evaluate a veteran’s application for benefits. Medically significant information from twelve tests with 4,300 participants — “Autumn Gold,” “Copper Head,” “Shady Grove,” “Eager Belle” (phases I and II), and “Scarlet Sage,” “Fearless Johnny,” “Flower Drum” (phases I and II), “DTC Test 68-50,” “DTC Test 69-32,” and “Purple Sage,” — has been declassified and released to VA. The tests involved mostly members of the Navy.

Current information indicates any medical problems associated with exposure to the substances used in the tests, or during clean-up operations, would have been apparent shortly after the exposure.

VA will review the medical condition of Project SHAD veterans for unusual patterns of illness. Any eligible veteran’s medical problem linked to Project SHAD can be treated at VA medical facilities and, potentially, qualify the veteran for VA disability compensation.

Veterans who believe their health may have been affected by these tests should contact the SHAD helpline at 1-800-749-8387 or contact VA by email at shadhelpline@vba.va.gov.

Source: Federal VA Press Release: May 23, 2002

Online System Speeds Up Veterans’ Home Loan Processing

A new federal Internet-based system for mortgage bankers and other lenders will speed up the processing of home loans for veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

After the veteran’s information is entered by the financial institution providing the loan, the lender will receive a certificate authenticating the veteran’s eligibility in seconds. Previously, when a certificate of eligibility was needed, a form was submitted to VA and the certificate was mailed, a process that can take a week or more.

The new system, called Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE), should be especially beneficial for active-duty members and veterans who are using their home loan benefit for the first time.

All lenders participating in the VA loan guaranty program have access to the system. Veterans or servicemembers interested in learning more about their VA home loan benefits or who wish to obtain forms may visit www.homeloans.va.gov on the Internet.

Source: Federal VA Press Release: June 12, 2002

Transportation Security Administration

On November 19, 2001, President Bush signed into law the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), which among other things established a new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) within the Department of Transportation. This Act established a series of challenging but critically important milestones toward achieving a secure air travel system.

Congress has set the following deadlines for the TSA:

- November 18, 2002 – TSA must control and operate all passenger screening functions; and
- December 31, 2002 – TSA must implement 100% Explosive Detection System (EDS) baggage.

Currently, the TSA is hiring for a variety of positions at airports across the country. TSA does provide military veterans who retired after a career in service a preference when it comes to filling the federal jobs created by the legislation.

More information on positions is available at www.tsa.dot.gov or by calling 866-289-9673.

60th Anniversary of the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor

The year 2002 marks the 60th anniversary of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor and of the infamous “Death March”. Bataan fell on April 9, 1942, and Corregidor, on May 6, 1942.

From April 1942 to August 1945, thousands of POWs captured by the Japanese were marched under the hot sun in groups at least 55 miles from Mariveles, on the southern end of the Bataan Peninsula, and Bagac to San Fernando, Pampanga, and then transferred to railway box cars to Capas, Tarlac, and marched to Camp O’Donnell. Thousands of Allied prisoners suffered imprisonment in the Philippines and many died of disease and starvation.

On April 17, 2002, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi concluded an official, two-day visit to the Philippines. The visit was notable as the first visit to the Philippines of a U.S. Cabinet official under the administration of President George W. Bush and as the first-ever official visit of a Veterans Affairs Secretary to this country, where Filipino and American soldiers fought shoulder-to-shoulder in World War II.

Noting the U.S. debt to Filipino veterans of World War II, the Secretary began his official visit with a trip to Corregidor, where he lauded “the heroic Filipino men and women who sacrificed so much to liberate their beloved country and who helped the allies emerge victorious from World War II.”

Source: Federal VA Press Release: April 17, 2002

The American Ex-Prisoners of War

“We exist to help those who cannot help themselves.”



Founded April 14, 1942 the American Ex-Prisoners of War organization has existed for the purpose of helping others. The organization of former POW's (military and civilian), their spouses, families and civilian internees has helped those affected by their capture deal with the trauma through friendship of those who shared a common experience.

The American Ex-Prisoners of War organization is a national organization for American citizens who were captured by the enemy. Membership is open to all former prisoners of war from any theater in any war, all former civilian internees and to the families of such persons. The organization does not have “associate” members or an auxiliary association. Each and every member is entitled to all privileges of membership.

Currently, the American Ex-Prisoners of War has more than 300 Chapters and State Departments, representing over 30,000 members. For additional information, contact:

American Ex-Prisoners of War National Headquarters
3201 East Pioneer Parkway, #40
Arlington, Texas 76010-5396
Telephone: (817) 649-2979 Fax: (817) 649-0109 email
axpow@sbcglobal.net

Washington has eleven chapters throughout the state.

To locate a chapter near you, contact National Senior Vice-Commander Maurice Sharp, (253) 565-9444 or email sharp1955@juno.com, or visit axpow.org/dept_chp.htm#WA

Maurice Sharp, Korean War Ex-POW, will assume the office of National Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War in September, 2002. Sharp is currently the National Senior Vice-Commander and Jr. Past Department of Washington Commander.



History of American Ex-POWs

In 1942, information was being leaked out about the atrocities and sub-human treatment that American prisoners of war were receiving in Japanese prison camps in the Pacific. When wives and mothers heard about their sons and husbands who had been taken prisoner, they started calling and writing to Congress in an effort to find help or get assistance for their loved ones. Eventually, two mothers whose sons were members of the 200th Coast Artillery, and had been captured by the Japanese, came up with an idea.

On April 10, 1942, **Mrs. Charles W. Bickford** and **Mrs. Fred E. Landon**, persuaded other parents and relatives to hold a mass meeting. There, they formed an organization to send relief to the captured boys on Bataan. On April 14th, the *Bataan Relief Organization* was formed with Dr. V. H. Spensley, of Albuquerque, as Chairman. Their motto was “We will not let them down.”

The Bataan Relief Organization actively pursued relief efforts for the POWs and served as a clearinghouse for information. From this

group in Albuquerque, other chapters sprang up across the United States. The “BRO” was incorporated September 8th, 1943.

In 1945, control of the Bataan Relief Organization was turned over to the liberated members of the New Mexico’s 200th Coast Artillery Regiment. In 1946, the name was changed to *Bataan Veteran’s Organization*.

The first National convention was held May 14, 1948, in Albuquerque. The second National convention was held in Hollywood, California, April 1949. At this convention, it was voted to change the name to *American Ex-Prisoners of War* and change the name of the bulletin to *XPOW*. The reason for the change was so veterans from the European Theater would realize that they were eligible for membership. By changing the name to American Ex-Prisoners of War, it would be clear that all former POW’s are welcome. There were 800 participants at the 1949 convention.

(Information obtained from www.axpow.org/history.htm)

Find Them and Help Them

According to the American Ex-Prisoners of War, most ex-prisoners of war are unaware of their entitlements. The Veteran’s Administration states that 55,999 Ex-POW’s were alive as of January 1998. As the American Ex-POWs have a membership of 15,703, their goal is to locate the remaining 40,296 and offer assistance in obtaining entitlements. More information can be found at www.ax-pow.com.

Prisoner of War Medal

Description and Symbolism



Front

In the center of a bronze medallion one and three eighths inches in diameter, an eagle is shown with its wings displayed. Forming a circle around the eagle and following the contour of the medal, barbed wire and bayonet points may be seen. The eagle is the American bald eagle and represents the United States in general and the individual prisoner of war in particular. It is standing “with pride and dignity, continually on the alert for the opportunity to seize hold of beloved freedom.”

Back

The reverse has the inscription “AWARDED TO” around the top and “FOR HONORABLE SERVICE WHILE A PRISONER OF WAR” across the center in three lines with a space between the two inscriptions for engraving the name of the recipient. The shield of the Coat of Arms of the United States is centered on the lower part of the reverse side with the inscription “UNITED STATES OF AMERICA” around the bottom of the medal.

Ribbon

The ribbon to the Prisoner of War Medal is 1 3/8 inches wide and consists of a central band of black edged in white. The edge stripes of the ribbon are composed of pinstripes of red, white and blue (with the red forming the outer edge of the ribbon). The red, white and blue edge stripes represent the United States; the larger white stripes represent hope, and the black center stripe alludes to the bleakness of confinement as a prisoner of war.

Washington State WWII Participants Needed as Speakers at Schools

The WWII Educational Foundation, in conjunction with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, has spent the last year holding workshops for middle and high school educators, introducing them to the mini series “When We Were Kids, We Went to War.” Distribution of the two-hour film – authorized under Public Law 112, Laws of 2000, which mandates the teaching of WWII history in Washington’s public schools – will begin this fall.

“This miniseries is a vehicle that has connected the generations,” said Karl Schmidt of Bristol Productions. Schmidt has conducted more than 200 interviews for the miniseries, and is responsible for the new website www.wiithistoryclass.com/, The Voices of World War II for use in the classroom.

“This project has created an interest that was not there before,” said Schmidt.

The next step, according to Schmidt, is to develop a list of WWII participants who would be willing to visit a classroom in their home area, when requested by a teacher.

If you have an interest in talking with students about your experiences during WWII, contact Karl Schmidt at Bristol Productions 360-754-4260, or email at karl@bristolproductions.com.



WWII Educational Foundation Chair, Bill Merifield, (center) accepts a recognition and appreciation award from VAAC Chair Oria Burndt (left) and WDVA Director John King. The Foundation’s work with OSPI has resulted in a miniseries for use in teaching WWII history.

Name of Washington Soldier added to State WWII Memorial

The name of Lt. Melvin L. Baze has been added to the Washington State World War II Memorial, located on the capitol campus in Olympia.

According to military records, Baze - a resident of Outlook - was wounded on January 18, 1945, while serving with the 45TH Cavalry, 45th Infantry Division in Reipertswiller, France, and died January 21, 1945. His body was brought to Sunnyside, WA by the War Department on May 8, 1948, and was interred at the Sunnyside Cemetery.

Baze’s sister, Bertie Howry of San Mateo, CA., recently discovered the omission of her brother’s name from the memorial, and provided the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs with documentation that lead to the addition of the name, bringing the total for Washington State WWII casualties to 5,844.

A list of the names can be found at www.dva.wa.gov/WWII%20KIA-MIA.asp, and information on the memorial can be found at www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/.

National World War II Memorial Construction Update



“An overview shot of the National WWII Memorial construction site on the Mall in Washington, D.C., with the Washington Monument in the background. (Photo: Richard Latoff)”

Construction of the National World War II Memorial is progressing on schedule for completion and dedication in the spring of 2004.

Work began at the memorial site on the National Mall in late August 2001. Now seven months into a 30-month construction schedule, the joint venture of Tompkins Builders and Grunley-Walsh Construction has completed site preparation (site surveys and installation of project trailers, temporary parking and utilities, and security fencing); tree protection, relocation and removal; erosion control measures; and much of the utility relocation work planned in the construction area.

The first phase in building the foundation of the memorial – constructing a concrete cutoff (slurry) wall extending from ground level down to bedrock – began in early February and will continue for several months. The slurry wall serves a dual function of providing a barrier to prevent migration of groundwater under the memorial and anchoring the outside perimeter of the foundation. Granite for the memorial architectural elements should begin arriving early next year.

The memorial has now received more than \$184 million in total cash and pledges, of which about \$25 million is from the federal government or earned interest. Although the American Battle Monuments Commission wrapped up major fund-raising activity, individuals continue to support the current and future needs of the memorial with financial contributions.

History Project Launched on June 6

Concerned that history may be dying along with 1,500 American war veterans every day, archivists are launching an effort to get their stories down in video and audio tapes for future reference.

The Veterans History Project was formally announced June 6, the 56th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of France, at the USS Intrepid sea-air-space museum in New York.

The Project, initiated by Congress and signed into law by former President Clinton in 2000, is run by the Library of Congress’s American Folklife Center.

It has a council of political, military and journalism figures, including former Sen. Bob Dole, retired CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite, war historian Stephen Ambrose and Everett Alvarez Jr., the longest-held American prisoner of war in Vietnam, later a top Veterans Administration official.

There are about 19 million war veterans in the United States, many of them from World War II. But the rate at which they, and Korean veterans, are disappearing lends urgency to the history project.

About 200 organizations nationwide are participants in the project, which seeks to have as many veterans as possible recall their experiences in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf war — even the few that are left from World War I.

The project encourages schools, libraries, veterans groups and other local entities to seek out veterans to tell their stories.

Source: RICHARD PYLE, Associated Press Writer

Washington State Veterans Homes *Memorial Day 2002*

The Washington Soldiers Home and Colony joined with thousands of Americans to honor the memory of fallen veterans during their Memorial Day program for 2002.

The Puyallup Community Band, under the direction of Rush Ward, provided patriotic music for the occasion, and the 62nd Airlift Wing Honor Guard from McChord posted and retired the colors.

Lt. Commander Sean Bergesen, Jt. Liaison for Western Air Defense Sector, spoke about the importance of remembering those we honor as the people they were: "I plan to learn more about our Nation's fallen warriors in an effort to keep their memories alive. Reminiscing about what they did, not just how they died, is important.

"Memorial Day is one day set aside to honor those fallen. But, we owe them a debt of gratitude every day of every year."



Colorguard: l-r Sr. Airman Pamita Ragland, Sr. Airman James Cole, Sr. Airman Daran Campbell, Sr. Airman Matthew Wilson.



VFW Post and Auxiliary members lay Memorial flowers.



Remembering the Past... Embracing the Future

The theme of Retsil's 2002 Memorial Day Ceremony accurately describes the day's events as participants honored our past heroes and offered prayers for today's soldiers.

Patriotic music, courtesy of the Clam Island Band, filled the auditorium and the Knights of Columbus and South Kitsap High School NJROTC reverently posted the colors.

Superintendent Bob Jones and WDVA Director John King offered a welcome and Memorial Day Address, while the South Kitsap High School Sign Choir moved several audience members to tears with their rendition of God Bless America.

A Roll Call of Veterans Home members lost over the year was followed by a 21 Gun Salute, "Taps" and the Benediction.

"It was heartwarming to see so many community members in attendance," said Jones. "It truly made this year's ceremony special."



Roy Gronka, VFW 11403, WWII Navy with Guest speaker Lt. Commander Sean Bergesen, Joint Liaison for Western Air Defense Sector (WADS) U.S. Navy at McChord AFB and his daughter, Jessica.



Resident Abe Caylor, WWI veteran listening to speaker.



WDVA Director John King gave the Retsil Memorial Day Address.



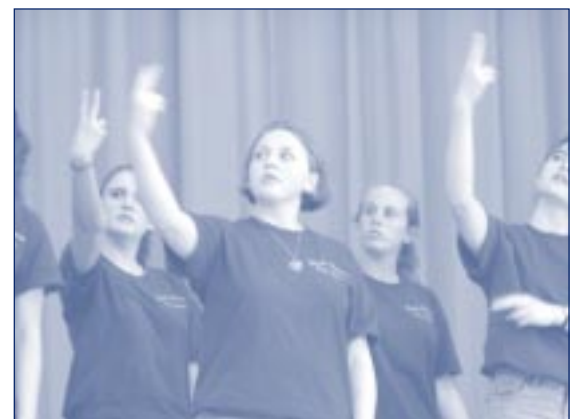
The Knights of Columbus joined with the South Kitsap Jr. ROTC posted the colors at Retsil.



The Knights of Columbus honored Bob Sauter for all his accomplishments and support given to veterans and veterans issues.



A large crowd of residents and their family and friends attended the Memorial Day ceremony.



The newly created Sign Choir from South Kitsap High School, signed a rendition of God Bless America.

Washington State Veterans Homes

The Spokane Veterans Home held a Memorial Day ceremony for their residents, their families and friends on Sunday, May 26.

The Lilac City Young Marines posted the colors while SSgt. William Berry of the ANG Band of the NW played the National Anthem on his trumpet.

Guest speakers included Gus Fabbe of Inland Empire Allied Veterans Council, and Michael Beegle, Command Sergeant Major, Retired, Army National Guard.

The Roll Call was given by Doug Jones, District 9 VFW.

Residents also attended a program on Monday at a nearby facility.



Residents and Family members attending the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Spokane Veterans Home.



SSgt. William Berry, ANG Band of the NW played the National Anthem.



Gus Fabbe of Inland Empire Allied Veterans Council, gave the keynote address.



Do you know a veteran needing long-term care? The Washington Veterans Homes can help you serve their needs.

To be eligible for admission to the Homes, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ◆ A veteran discharged under honorable conditions;
- ◆ Washington state resident; and
- ◆ Meet certain financial guidelines

**For an application or more information call
1-877-VETS-R-US
(1-877-838-7787)**

Henry Hines Estate Gives Generous Donation

VAAC member Bob Westphal (right) presented a generous donation from the Henry Hines Estate, for all three Veterans Homes, at the recent VAAC meeting. Superintendents Bob Jones and Jerry Towne were on hand to accept the donation.



Conley Accepts DNS Position

WDVA is pleased to announce that Margaret Conley, ARNP, RN has accepted the permanent position as Director of Nursing Services for the WA Soldiers Home. Conley has been with the Home since 1984, serving as Nursing Supervisor, and as Nurse Practitioner.



Street Talk

With the Retsil Veterans Home Residents

What is your most memorable Summer vacation?



In 1930, while in the service, I won \$10,000 on a Eagle lottery ticket. I sent \$7,000 home to Mom and with the rest, I took a NYK liner from Shangai to Hong Kong. On the four-day cruise, I met a girl and we spent the next two weeks together swimming at the beach, site seeing and enjoying each other's company. I never saw her again.

Al Evans



In 1984, my ex-wife and I took our 4 year old daughter Sandy to Hawaii. Sandy really enjoyed the beach and the International Village.

Dennis Johnson



I went to San Antonio and visited my older brother during the war.

Ray Burrows



Thirty years ago, I took my three daughters to Disneyland. I loved it all – the African River boat, the Haunted House, Abe Lincoln making his speech. They all got Mickey Mouse ears and we saw the Electric Light Parade and fireworks.

Robert Haynes

State Helps Former Military People Find Jobs

Gov. Gary Locke has proclaimed June 2002 as “Hire-A-Veteran Month.” The governor commended the many veterans residing in the state who “have served our country with dedication, perseverance and courage.” Locke also recognized Washington’s veterans as “a well-trained, sometimes untapped pool of labor with a wide range of technical skills.”

In today’s labor market, a previous military career could be the competitive edge job seekers need to succeed.

Employment Security provided services to 43,037 veterans between July 2001 and March 2002. Of those, 7,781 were placed in jobs, 4,153 received employment counseling and 298 were placed in training. The department also works with employers, who often can be partially reimbursed for wages paid to veterans enrolled in on-the-job training. Staff who provide services are also veterans.

“Some people, especially women, don’t consider themselves veterans because they haven’t served in a war,” said Onesimo Espinoza, who leads the Washington Employment Security Department’s Veterans’ Services Unit. “But we help veterans with disabilities and other former military people — whether you’ve seen combat or not.”

Job seekers and employers wanting additional information about veterans’ services can inquire through WorkSource, a partnership of state agencies and nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping job seekers and employers. To find the closest center, call 877-872-JOBS or visit go2worksource.com.

Mayor of Auburn, Pete Lewis, and Veteran Representative Beth Augustine, exchange “Hire-A-Vet” Month Proclamations at the WorkSorce Auburn Affiliate Veteran Services Unit on Flag Day.



Reaching out to Female Veterans

Through partnerships with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and Women Organizing Women (WOW), the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has become more active in providing outreach to female veterans. “Women are the most underserved veteran population for a variety of reasons especially those who have suffered trauma while on active duty,” says Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, WDVA Assistant Director. “It just makes sense that the agency have one point of contact where female veterans can feel more comfortable discussing their sensitive claims.” For this reason, WDVA has assigned Veteran’s Community Services Coordinator (VCSC) Cherise McArthur as the agency’s advocate for female veterans.

McArthur is currently the VCSC for Congressional District 9. In addition to her responsibilities as VCSC, Alvarado-Ramos defines her added advocacy role as “the ‘go-to’ veterans advocate for women veterans, and particularly those who need the special care and attention of a female advocate.”

You can contact Cherise by calling 253-381-3204, 1-877-747-3921 or via email cherisem@dva.wa.gov.



Gov. Gary Locke signs a proclamation proclaiming June 2002 as “Hire-A-Veteran Month.”



★

WOMEN’S WELLNESS FAIR
Saturday, September 28th, 2002
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Olympia Community Center

In honor of women who serve/served in the U.S. Military

A Veterans Information and Assistance Fair.
Sponsored by the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

Questions? Call (888) 341-7178 www.dva.wa.gov

★

Veterans Information and Assistance Fair Schedule

Date/Time	Location	Date/Time	Location	Date/Time	Location
Sat, June 29 10am-3pm	American Legion Post #43 701 Murdock St Sedro Woolley	Thur, Sept 12 11am-6pm	BPO Elks Lodge #2642 143 Port Williams Road Sequim	Sat, October 19 10am-3pm	VVA Chapter #212 60862 Cascade River Drive Marblemount
Sunday, June 30 10am-2pm	University Place Fire Station 3631 Bridgeport Way University Place	Sat, Sept 14 9am-3pm	Carl Stevens Senior Center 411 W. 2nd Street Yakima	Sat, October 19 9am-3pm	Yakima Valley College 16th Avenue and Nob Hill Yakima
Friday, August 9 9am-3pm	Navy/Marine Corps Reserve Center 5101 N. Assembly Street Spokane	Sat, Sept 28 10am-3pm	Olympia Community Center 222 North Columbia Olympia	Friday, Nov 15 11am-6pm	Jefferson WSU Learning Center 201 West Patison Port Hadlock
Sat, August 24 10am-3pm	American Legion Post #141 14096 SR 525 Langley	Sat, Sept 28 10am-3pm	American Legion Post #92 26921 88th Street NW Stanwood	Sat, Nov 16 10am-2pm	American Legion Post #96 1201 1st Street Snohomish
Sat, August 24 9am-3pm	VFW Post #3617 11th and Baker East Wenatchee	Fri, October 4 2pm-7pm	Silverdale Community Center 9729 Silverdale Way NW Silverdale	Sat, Dec 7 9am-3pm	VFW Post #3617 11th and Baker East Wenatchee

In The Spotlight

“Serving Those Who Served” takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies.

In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.



Corpsman Melissa Wilt, and husband Steven.

Corpsman Melissa Wilt began her service in the U.S. Navy after she had been married four years to Navy husband Steven, when their daughter Valerie was only three years old.

Stationed at Naval Regional Medical Center in Charleston, S.C., Wilt was assigned to the surgical ward and later, Labor and Delivery, after completing Corps school in the Great Lakes area. As a Corpsman,

the only nursing duties not allowed were hanging IV medications, passing narcotics, and taking medical orders from physicians.

The remainder of her tour was spent at one of the Naval Station branch clinics, where, in addition to active duty sick call, her duties included participating in their Asbestos Monitoring program. Work histories on more than 10,000 civilians and 5,000 sailors were needed to determine the level of exposure to asbestos.

After her discharge in 1982, Wilt spent the next eight years in Cuba, Virginia Beach and Spain, as she accompanied her husband on his Navy tours.

Arriving in Washington in 1990, Wilt attended the Health Information Management Program, graduating in June 1992, and immediately went to work at Harrison Hospital in Bremerton handling Medical Records, until coming to work at WDVA in Aug. 1996.

Wilt attributes her enjoyment and success at her medical records job with the Washington Veterans Home to her training in the Navy. “It helps to understand the relationship between the care of a person and the documentation required,” said Wilt.

Wilt is a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) and serves as a member of the Long Term Care Health Information Managers (LTVHIM) education committee. Her husband, Steven retired from the Navy in 1998, and daughter Valerie is a social worker in Portland. When asked if they have grandchildren, Wilt replied, “We have a granddog named Salomon.”



Melissa Wilt, RHIT
WA Veterans Home

New Laws In Effect

State Legislation enacted during the 2002 Session became effective June 13, 2002, unless another date was specified in the bill.

Displaying the POW/MIA Flag:

Every state agency, every state institution of higher education and every county, city, and town must display the national league of families POW/MIA flag along with the state and national flags upon or near its principal buildings on specific days.

These days are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans’ Day.



How to display the POW/MIA flag:

- The POW/MIA flag may be flown directly under the United States Flag.
- When flying the Washington State flag under the United States Flag, or on a separate pole, the POW/MIA flag may be flown below the State flag.



Exempting Veteran’s Records from public view:

Veterans, who filed their DD214 in the County Auditor’s Office, can now exempt their DD214 from public view. The “request for exemption from public disclosure of discharge papers” form is available at www.dva.wa.gov and at your County Auditor’s Office.

State Representatives attend VLC Conference



Rep. Sandra Romero (22nd District), advised the VLC on how to approach legislative issues.

The Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) held their annual two day meeting at the Pacific Beach Resort & Conference Center on May 31 and June 1. Led by Chairman Dan Gogerty, VLC members discussed potential legislative issues for the 2003 session and also reviewed the successes and disappointments of the 2002 session.

Guest speaker Representative Sandra Romero (22nd District), offered an overview of the legislative process and some advice on how to approach legislative issues. Representative Jim Buck (24th District) was the invited dinner speaker and shared with the audience some of his personal experiences and photos at the site of the World Trade Center attacks.



Homeless Veterans
Fall Stand-Down
September 26, 2002

Peoples Community Center
1602 Martin Luther King Way
Tacoma, WA

Phone: 253-798-7449-7439
Email: pnwsd@msn.com

**HATS
OFF!**



CWO Christopher Navarre, Sr. USA (ret), has spent countless hours ensuring that Korean War veterans, living in nursing homes in the Puget Sound area, receive a Freedom Medallion from the Korean American Cultural Foundation. (This medallion is separate from the Republic of Korea War Medal issued by the Korean Government). At 82 years of age, Navarre, a Silver Star and Purple Heart recipient, arranged for eight more medallions to be presented on Memorial Day to residents at the Hallmark Manor nursing home in Federal Way. Navarre says he has to make sure everyone who served is remembered. CWO Navarre, on behalf of all veterans, thank you.



The Washington Veterans Home at Retsil received a membership to the local Chamber of Commerce, paid for by the **Port Orchard Holiday Inn Express**. General Manager Sharon Pierce said it only made sense to her that helping community members, especially the veterans, was the right thing to do.

On behalf of the WDVA, Thank You.

Sharon Pierce, General Manager (right) stands with Assistant Manager Geni Loch.



The Gardeners of Spokane provided the Spokane Veterans Home with spring plants, including vegetables for residents to help take care of and harvest this fall. All plants and labor were donated by the group. Volunteers included Tom and Jan Jefferson, Jim McKay, Elmo Dinehart, Lucy Smathers and Rich Hill.

Thanks a Bunch! From the Spokane Veterans Home residents.

Harley Night at the Rock

Saturday, August 17, 2002

Castle Rock, WA

*****Salute to Veterans Ride*****

Ride from Castle Rock Race Park to Mt. St. Helens and back

- Sign-up 8:30 am – 10:00 am
- Run Pins for the first 100 paid participants
- Cost \$20 per person - \$30 per couple
- Price includes barbecue and admission to the evening's Main Event Racing
- Mt. St. Helens Motorcycle Club will donate **proceeds from this event to the Washington Homeless Veterans Program** administered by WDVA.

*****Veterans Information Fair*****

Have you ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces?

If the answer is Yes, then You Are a Veteran and may be entitled to benefits!!

WDVA, WA Army National Guard, Veterans Service Organizations, City/County health, & employment counselors on-site 10:00 am – 4:00 pm with important information regarding benefits. To participate as a vendor or for more information, call 360-725-2180.

*****MAIN EVENT*****

Flat Track Racing – 125cc and up

www.mshmc.org 360-274-8700 or 360-274-9217

You are cordially invited to the annual

Wreathlaying Ceremony Commemorating the Korean War Armistice Anniversary

July 27, 11:00 a.m.

**Korean War Veterans Memorial
Capitol Campus
Olympia, WA**

Featured Highlights:

- ✧ Unveiling of name Carson O. Thomas on memorial
- ✧ The Purple Heart medal presented to a Korean War Veteran, 50 years after it was earned
- ✧ Gospel Outreach Choir of Olympia
- ✧ U. S. Marine Corps – 4th LANSPTBN
- ✧ Washington State Korean American War Veterans
- ✧ Washington State Korean Community

The public is invited to participate by bringing wreaths and flowers to lay.

Young people and children will have the opportunity to lay flowers, provided at the site.

For information call Colleen Gilbert at (360) 725-2180